

Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting Minutes December 12, 2025

Minutes of the State Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting

Friday, December 12, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Lake Michigan Room, Michigan Economic Development Corporation
300 North Washington Square, Lansing, Michigan 48913

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Devan Anderson, Daniel Bollman, Matthew Daley, Lane Demas, Sharon Ferraro, Krysta Ryzewski, Ann Scott, Ronald Staley

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Lakota Hobia (pre-excused)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Martha MacFarlane-Faes, Nathan Nietering, Haley Schriber, Ryan Schumaker, Sarah Surface-Evans, Todd Walsh, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Jon Stuckey and Austin Wright, Michigan Office of the Attorney General (AG)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

From list.

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board Chair Ryzewski called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda of the December 12, 2025 regular board meeting.

Motion: Anderson

Second: Staley

Vote: 8-0

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 22, 2025

Board Comments: None

Motion to approve the minutes as proposed.

Motion: Staley

Second: Anderson

Vote: 8-0

4. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Board Comments: None

Motion to elect Daniel Bollman as vice chair for a one-year term.

Motion: Anderson

Second: Staley

Vote: 8-0

5. 2026 REVIEW BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Potential dates of 2026 meetings and the first meeting of 2027 were discussed by board members with input from SHPO leadership.

- a. The following Fridays were proposed: March 6, 2026, May 29, 2026, September 25, 2026, February 12, 2027

Motion to accept this calendar of proposed dates

Motion: Ferraro

Second: Scott

Vote: 8-0

6. BOARD BUSINESS

- a. Follow up on Archaeology in National Register nominations
 - i. Following up from the discussion at the previous Review Board meeting, Ryzewski, Scott and Hobia met with Schumaker, Walsh and Surface-Evans in November to discuss processes and procedures for incorporating archaeology into all National Register nominations from Michigan. SHPO staff are supportive and agreed to propose a process after internal discussion.
 - ii. The single nomination at today's meeting does not require this since it is simply an Additional Documentation for something already listed.
 - iii. Schumaker highlighted that it would be essential to engage early on in the nomination process, as early as the National Register Preliminary Questionnaire (NRPQ) stage. As part of a larger project, the NRPQ submittal process will be shifting to an online-based SmartSheet later in winter of 2026. The plan is to ensure SHPO archaeology staff can review potential National Register sites at this early stage to help identify relevant archaeology sites and the extent in which archaeology should be integrated into the nomination from the get-go. This will alleviate the potential crunch of adding archaeology near the end of the process.
 - iv. Ryzewski asked about the timeline for integration. Walsh responded that part of this will depend on how quickly the SmartSheet can be finalized and tested, but the system should begin to be used soon.

(21:30)

7. SHPO STAFF REPORTS & BUSINESS

- a. SHPO Report – Ryan Schumaker and Martha MacFarlane-Faes

- i. Schumaker acknowledged several recent National Register listings have finally been approved by the National Park Service (NPS) after the lengthy federal government shutdown ended in mid-November. The nominations from the September review board meeting are now in the process of being submitted to NPS.
- ii. Schumaker acknowledged after the government shutdown, the continuing resolution that was approved keeps Historic Preservation Fund dollars stable for now.
- iii. In other grant project updates, SHPO's project to study sites listed in the African American Green Book for Negro Motorists is moving along with survey work generally complete on the approximately 36 sites which remain out of approximately 230 which were listed through the thirty years the book was published. The consultant continues to make progress on the deliverables.
- iv. SHPO was awarded a \$75,000 NPS Underrepresented Communities grant to study the architecture of Detroit architect Nathan Johnson. A grant agreement is in place and we are planning to issue an RFP later this winter to hire a consultant. The non-profit group Noir Design Parti will be a partner on this project.
- v. In September, SHPO applied for another round of funding from the NPS Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant Program and was awarded \$750,000. The money will be used to fund the Michigan Rural Heritage subgrant program to help fund rehabilitation efforts in Michigan's rural communities statewide. We asked for and are allowed to use ten percent of the awarded funds to go toward SHPO administrative costs as part of this grant. The Rural Heritage program will help to address the comments from many stakeholders during the statewide plan regional meetings that rural areas deeply need more preservation resources. A public announcement and program rollout for this competitive grant opportunity will take place in late winter and spring.
- vi. Schumaker discussed SHPO's ability to use Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) funding to hire four limited term, full time positions, including a historian and archaeologist reviewer, and two database management positions (with archaeology background) to ensure correct and accurate data is available. We are hoping by the end of January to have the four new employees onboard with SHPO.
- vii. In late October, a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing took place discussing the Section 106 process and potential to streamline consultation activities. Schumaker acknowledged it seems like there was a general misunderstanding that Section 106 is a permitting process, which it is not. The representative from the oil and gas industry was highly critical of federal agencies not communicating with one another and did not appear to offer a negative perception of SHPOs generally. The SHPO position was represented at the hearing by the Utah historic preservation officer. This will continue to be an evolving conversation.
- viii. 2026 will be the 25th anniversary of the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP). SHPO staff are working with MEDC

communications colleagues to highlight this anniversary and share some of the positive results that have come out of this quarter-century old program.

- ix. The Certified Local Government (CLG) FY2026 grant opportunity is open until early February and we are accepting applications now.
 - x. SHPO is planning to present four sessions at the 2026 Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) conference in metro Detroit, two discussing grant opportunities (CLG and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP – with MDOT)), historic tax credits, and an update on the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan process.
 - xi. MacFarlane-Faes continued the report regarding the historic preservation tax credit programs. Tax credit review times are near their 30 day goals. Unfortunately, one of our tax credit reviewers has been off on long term medical leave, but they hope to be back to work at least remotely in the near future.
 - xii. November 26 was the last day to apply for the 2025 State Historic Tax Credit opportunity. The 2026 State Historic Tax Credit will launch on January 2. Due to the quantity of large and small commercial tax credit applications and the proposed tax credit allocations for 2025-2026, we foresee not offering any state commercial tax credits in 2026, and only offering the state tax credit to residential homeowners.
 - xiii. The current state historic tax credit legislation will sunset in 2030 and the legislation states that all projects must be both submitted and completed by this time. Future applications will focus on shovel-ready projects. It's possible the legislature may amend the tax credit to raise the dollar cap for the program or extend the program life, but these are far from certain.
- b. Archaeology – Sarah Surface-Evans
- i. Surface-Evans provided a handout to board members summarizing FY25 archaeology program activities. In FY25, more than 315 new archaeology sites were identified across 40,000 acres of survey, nearly doubling the number of acres surveyed during the previous year.
 - ii. As part of the effort to prepare information relating to the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan, extensive data was pulled from the State Archaeological Site File (SASF). Since 2020, a total of 1,409 sites have been identified from 68,549 acres of survey. The SASF currently includes a total of 27,040 archaeological sites. SHPO implemented a required site form for all newly identified and revisited sites in 2022. This has helped to streamline the data entry process and improve data quality. Roughly 96% or 26,008 sites are currently in the SHPO Cultural Resource Inventory System (CRIS). We have also begun working with MDNR to assign site trinomials to underwater sites, linking them to counties rather than assigning them numbers corresponding to the Great Lakes. A map was provided to board members showing the density of underwater resources reflecting these new trinomials.

- iii. The distribution of terrestrial archaeological sites strongly correlates with current population densities across the state. The following counties should be targeted for regional survey efforts: Antrim, Otsego, Montmorency, Missaukee, Roscommon, Ogemaw, Osceola, Clare, Gladwin, Mecosta, Isabella, and Montcalm.
- iv. In assessing this data, we also determined that less than one percent of Michigan's archaeological sites are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including 194 terrestrial sites and 19 underwater. Approximately 800 sites have already been determined eligible for the National Register. These may represent low-hanging fruit and the SHPO staff would appreciate working with individuals to nominate more of these to the National Register.
- v. SHPO archaeology staff have been researching remaining collections within state holdings that may be subject to the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Consultation was recently concluded on remains from a site in Ontonagon County, and submitted the notification of inventory completion to National NAGPRA. Repatriation should take place in the next year.
- vi. We are pleased that the new hires under the MIHI program will include three individuals with archaeology expertise. This capacity will help us wrap up completion of the GIS archaeology layer which is undergoing quality control/quality assurance checks at this time.
- vii. In the area of public outreach hundreds or thousands of school groups have reached out to SHPO looking for expertise relating to the FIRST LEGO Challenge kids competition, which this school year is focusing on archaeology as its theme. SHPO archaeology staff hosted a fall webinar for participants and SHPO put together a special webpage to share relevant content with kids and families. This has been a tremendous success.
- viii. SHPO archaeology staff attended nearly 30 public events in 2025 and have reached more than 22,000 members of the public between in person and online activities.
- ix. The Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) international conference will take place at the Renaissance Center in Detroit in early January and offer an opportunity to share aspects of the Great Lakes region/Michigan's terrestrial and underwater archaeology with colleagues from across the country and far beyond. SHPO archaeologists will be involved in several aspects of the conference including giving tours, running panels, and presenting in sessions. The SHPO is one of the sponsors of this SHA conference.
- x. Two new books were recently published on topics of Michigan archaeology. [*The Historical Archaeology of Michigan*](#) and [*Post-Contact Archaeology of Michigan and the Upper Great Lakes Region*](#) are authored or edited in part by several individuals who currently or

previously served on the review board. Both books are many years in the making.

- xi. Surface-Evans concluded by sharing Michigan's 2025 archaeology month poster highlighting the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the *Edmund Fitzgerald* and the importance of shipwreck preservation, which was very popular with audiences this year. The printed poster is supported by a webpage with additional content online.

Ryzewski noted that both recently published books were published just in time for the SHA Detroit conference. Ryzewski thanked the SHPO for sponsoring the conference and highlighted how it will be the first time the conference has been hosted near the Great Lakes in many decades.

- c. National Register Report – Todd Walsh
 - i. Walsh noted that one benefit that came out of the Covid era are regularly scheduled meetings with our respective NRHP reviewers to discuss current and relevant topics in the program. In the most recent meeting, it was shared that there will soon be a new update to the NPS 10-900 Registration Form. A big change coming this year is that the form will be redesigned to meet new Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to make the form compliant and compatible with screen reader devices. It is likely the new version of the form will look very different from previous versions. The new form will be adopted quickly once finalized. We don't yet know what the new form will look like or have any best practices to share, yet.
 - ii. Nietering noted that the new accessibility requirements affect all levels of government. Future electronic documents and online communications including webpages and social media posts will need to be compliant start in late April 2026.
 - iii. The National Register's Traditional Cultural Place (TCP) expert has recently retired. TCP's will now be reviewed by each state's respective reviewer along with Sherry Freer, the National Register Chief. The TCP reviewer also reviewed nominations from several states and is not expected to be replaced in the short term, leading those states to be distributed among other reviewers. Michigan is unaffected by this.
 - iv. Legacy National Register guidance bulletins such as 15 and 16A that had previously been identified for revision are on pause. However, NPS is still able to publish "best practice" documents to provide clarifications to existing NRHP guidance.

8. GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Presented by Nathan Nietering

6 projects are proposed to receive Governor's Awards for 2026.

- a. Walter French School
Motion: Ferraro
Second: Scott
Vote: 6-0
Recused: Anderson, Bollman

- b. Studebaker Service Building, Northfield Township rural survey and designation project, Isle Royale Archaeology, Capri Drive-In Theater, and Clarkston Resurvey Project
Motion: Demas
Second: Staley
Vote: 8-0

9. NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

- a. **Muskegon Historic District (Additional Documentation), Muskegon, Muskegon County**

Presented by Todd Walsh

Board comments: Walsh noted this was one of the earlier National Register nominations in Michigan. Anderson inquired if Walsh knew which one was the first, and when. Walsh responded that he did not know but would look in to it. Walsh added that in discussion with the city of Muskegon's preservation planner, it appears the decision to list this district was a direct reaction to the tide of demolition which was particularly heavy at this time period. Bollman highlighted the excellent discussion of all of the building moves into and out of the district boundaries through the period of significance and how that spirit of moving buildings in some ways defines one of the unique aspects of this district. Walsh agreed that this area, even beyond these district boundaries, continued to be defined by the theme of moves, as another home from the same time period was recently moved to a vacant lot just beyond the district boundaries. Ferraro noted that in Kalamazoo, all five of the oldest houses in the city were all moved from their original sites, so this wasn't uncommon.

Motion to approve the nomination as presented.

Criteria and Level: A&C, state (unchanged)

Motion: Anderson

Second: Ferraro

Vote: 8-0

10. LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Presented by Haley Schriber

Ryzewski provided an overview of the role of the board in reviewing local historic district study committee reports.

a. Village of Berrien Springs Historic District, Berrien Springs, Berrien County

Board comments: None.

b. Milan Main Street Historic District, Milan, Washtenaw and Monroe Counties

Board comments: Scott noted that she thought this report did a good job acknowledging archaeology, and wished the Berrien Springs report offered the same archaeology considerations. Bollman noted the tone of this report seemed more conversational and a little less formal than many of these reports typically offer. He also suggested making sure the photos referenced in the text are placed close to the text itself, rather than many pages away, for easier reference.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT & CORRESPONDENCE

Summary of Correspondence: No correspondence was received.

Summary of Public Comment: No public comments were offered.

NOTE: Comments offered by the public are limited to 2 minutes per speaker.

12. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

a. March 6, 2026, May 29, 2026, September 25, 2026, February 12, 2027

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Scott

Second: Staley

Vote: 8-0

Meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Nietering